

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Gallatin City Buildings

AND/OR COMMON

Three Forks of the Missouri

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Three Forks

☒ VICINITY OF☐ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Western

STATE

Montana

CODE

COUNTY

Gallatin

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☒ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☒ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☒ OTHER: vacant**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

State of Montana (Hotel) and Don Beebe (Akin's Barn and

STREET & NUMBER

Stovenour Cottage)

9 4th Ave. East (Beebe)

CITY, TOWN

Three Forks

☐ VICINITY OF

STATE

Montana

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Gallatin City was once a prosperous town that once featured a race track in addition to its numerous houses, stores and hotel. Records are rather sketchy as to the race track's location but it is believed to have been just west of the highway to Trident. North of this point there are the remains of the grist mill and a later root cellar. The location of the ferry boat landing is marked for the visitor.

East of the highway and the most significant building in the grouping is the two story log hotel. Its simple gable roof has a 6 in 12 pitch and is covered with wood shingles. The building has undergone numerous changes over the years and no longer resembles a hotel. An addition was removed in later years and the building was converted to a barn. Wide doors were cut into the structure to permit the entry of a wagon.

At one time the building was sheathed with siding attached to studs and/or wood runners nailed over the horizontal square-hewn logs. This sheathing of the logs seems to have been rather common in the early towns of prior to the turn of the century. The siding gave a better weather seal against the wind that would find a way to penetrate the chinking of the logs. This early method of insulating and weather sealing can be compared to today's applications of aluminum siding over existing siding for the same purpose.

Not only has the exterior been altered by doors but the interior was entirely changed to adapt the building to use as a barn. No longer is there a staircase to the second floor and one must use his imagination to picture the interior as a hotel.

Several hundred feet south of the old hotel stands a group of buildings on the land now owned by Don Beebe. Here can be found an abandoned one story house with numerous outbuildings including an old barn, an outhouse, and in the front yard a water well. There are several additional structures of a much later vintage that also include a log barn used as a machinery shed. At one time what was believed to have been the early blacksmith's shop, a one story false fronted structure, stood behind the house and to the south of the old barn.

The abandoned house is known as the Stovenour Cottage. It is a one story frame building of a "T"-shaped plan containing three or four rooms. The building is boarded up and entry was not gained. The house has a simple gable roof, 6 in 12 pitch, and is covered with wood shingles. The longer leg (north-south wing) of the building has a brick chimney near the intersection of the other leg. There is also a stove vent (flue) near the north wall, of the east-west wing.

Of interest is that the siding of the building has had a stucco covering added at a later date. Once painted white, the surface is

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now a mellow gray and the horizontal board lines are beginning to show through the stucco that is now cracking and beginning to peel in places. The front porch wooden boards are rotting due to neglect.

The two story barn stands behind the house to the east and slightly to the north. It has a gable roof with a 6 in 12 pitch and is covered with wood shingles. Unlike the old hotel to the north, the barn has board and batten siding. Numerous pieces of the siding have been torn from the building, seeking both the square nails and the weathered siding. *by people*

The barn is oriented with its gable ends east and west. Noteworthy is the diamond-shaped opening in the west gable. A similar form is not found in the east gable.

In addition to the outhouse standing between the house and the barn there are several other structures in the immediate vicinity. A wooden railroad box car is located behind the house. Over the years many structures adjacent to this complex have disappeared. The town site had been platted into building lots which are no longer visible. Only a few buildings and foundations remain today of one of the earliest towns in the state. Mr. Beebe, owner of part of the property, has been plagued with vandalism, theft and trespassing on his land. It is hoped that the state will purchase the property to expand the Headwaters Park that has now been designated as the state's Bicentennial Park.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1864-1890

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Jarvis Akin

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Missouri River Headwaters area of Montana was a stage on which part of the drama of the opening of the Territory was enacted. Many of the players came on and moved off leaving scant trace of their having been here. Long before white men came the region was frequented by Indian tribes; archeological studies have revealed an ancient chert mine on the cliffs above the west side of the Missouri River. It was from this region that Sacajawea, Indian guide of Lewis and Clark, was captured from her Shoshone tribe, and there is evidence of several large Indian campgrounds in the area.

The first white men known to have been here were the explorers of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. They arrived in July, 1805, and camped for three days, during which time they explored the nearer parts of the three rivers and named them for President Jefferson and two of his cabinet members, James Madison and Albert Gallatin. The explorers then traveled up the Jefferson River and over to the Pacific where they wintered. The following summer saw part of the expedition under Clark again camped here and from here one group proceeded down the Missouri while Clark and others traveled up the Gallatin and over the Bozeman Pass to the Yellowstone River which they followed downstream.

Beaver and other fur-bearing animals abounded in this region and the trappers were close behind the explorers. The Blackfeet Indians attacked several parties that tried to establish themselves in this area but in spite of their hostility a party of thirty-two arrived in April, 1810, at the headwaters where they built the Three Forks Post, sometimes called Fort Henry. The Blackfeet continued their harrassment and the fort was abandoned in the fall of 1810. The danger from the Indians limited trapping here for a decade or more but inevitably the beaver were trapped out and became scarce.

Other white men began to pass through here as well, Father DeSmet, the great Catholic missionary among them. The stampede to California following the gold strikes there in 1849 also brought some through on the "Missouri highway" though the fiercity of the Blackfeet deterred many. But in 1855 a treaty was negotiated which moved the boundaries of Blackfeet territory further north and the southern part of what is now Montana, including the Headwaters, was designated as a common hunting ground for all nations and tribes of Indians.

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The discovery of gold along Grasshopper Creek in 1862 in Montana increased the trickle of people coming to the area to a flood. While the Three Forks area was not the scene of a gold strike it grew in importance as a crossroads. A town was laid out on the north banks of the Madison-Jefferson Rivers, opposite the mouth of the Gallatin River, and a ferry was established. However the settlers apparently preferred to locate on the opposite side of the river and Gallatin City One waned within a year while Gallatin City Two grew. The second Gallatin City was incorporated on March 11, 1865 and seemed to prosper at first. Its agricultural products were in great demand at the gold camps, the ferry was an important transportation link and several stage and immigrant routes passed nearby. Gallatin City organized itself as the seat of government of Gallatin County.

Three buildings remain which date from this era. The Gallatin City Hotel was built in 1868-9 by Jarvis Akin and enlarged in 1872. About 1880 Frank J. Dunbar took over the building. In later years the addition was removed and the hotel became a barn. Other buildings in the vicinity which remain are Akin's Barn and the Stovenour House. The latter was the home of John and Emily Stovenour. John had been a trapper before settling near Gallatin City where he established a large ranch. Emily Smith had tutored the children in a number of Gallatin City homes before a public school was started. She married Jarvis Akin's son, John, who died soon thereafter. Later Emily remarried, this time to John Stovenour. This cottage was their home for many years. In addition to these buildings Gallatin City also boasted a flour mill, several stores, a race track, fairgrounds and numerous residences.

Even as it was prospering events were in the making that would lead to the decline of Gallatin City. The town of Bozeman had been established in 1864 about thirty-five miles west in a rich agricultural valley and it continued to attract settlers. Bozeman became the county seat of Gallatin County in an election held on Christmas Day, 1867.

One of the reasons for the existence of Gallatin City was the ferry crossing of the Jefferson/Madison Rivers but in 1871 James Shedd, a bridgebuilder, came on the scene and projected a series of toll bridges through the area. He sent for his entire family and began building bridges across the Jefferson and Madison rivers and their sloughs and overflow channels. Shedd also built a toll house

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and hotel on the banks of the Madison and these became the nucleus of a new community known first as Bridgeville and later as Three Forks. By 1876 Gallatin City has become a semi-ghost town as many of its residents moved to Bridgeville or Bozeman.

In 1880 Shedd sold the bridge system to Paul and Hanley who continued to expand it. By 1888 there were 23 bridges across the two rivers and their sloughs. The operators advertised, "More toll bridges crossed for less money than any place in the world."

Finally, the railroad came through southern Montana in 1883 but by-passed Gallatin City. Thus the settlement that had been born out of transportation needs died as that need was no longer pressing. The bridges put the ferry out of business and the coming of the railroad changed the pattern of freight and business haulages. The area became, and still is, important primarily for farming and livestock. Railroads run on each side of the Missouri but no trains stop here and the east-west road connecting the cities of the state lies several miles to the south. Gallatin City was a stopping place along the route of the restless movement of people back and forth across southern Montana but though there are still transportation facilities and communications lines passing through or near the area few people stop any more.

